

Westvale-Harrington Park

A conservation area comprised of a scenic bluff above the Assabet River, together with the lowland intersected by the Second Division Brook is named for this part of Concord once known in the 19th and early 20th centuries as “Westvale”. The Wheeler and Harrington families farmed the agricultural fields, while the Damons ran the textile mill on the Assabet River for decades. The farming tradition continues with leased, actively farmed land and a new thriving community garden. The Second Division Brook area offers an intimate exposure to the river and the lively brook that meanders through it. Together these uplands and lowlands offer a varied walking experience on property with a hard-working, agricultural and industrial past.

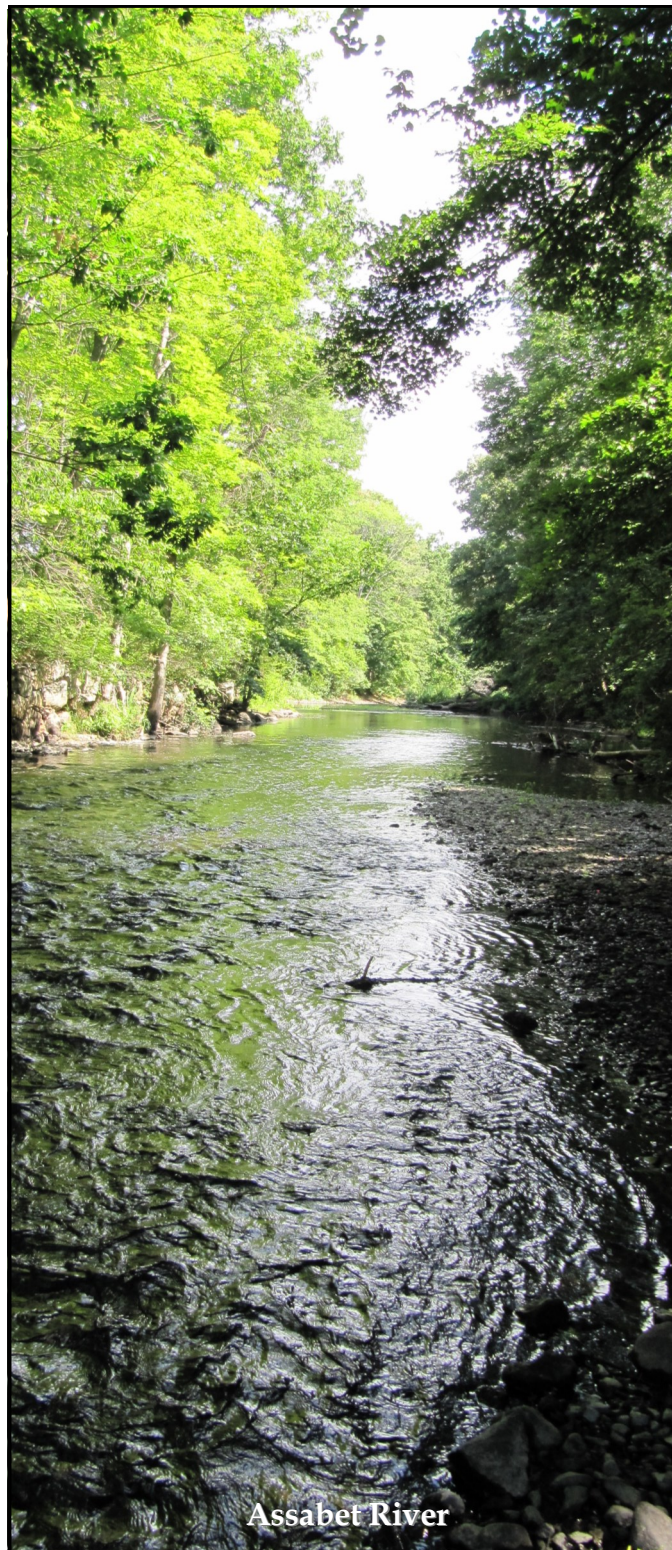
Location and Access

Access with parking for ten or more vehicles is located at two locations: an informal parking area is located at the community gardens at the end of a farm road off Harrington Avenue opposite the intersection with Old Mill Road; and a formal parking area at the end of a dirt driveway just west of the Harrington House on Harrington Avenue by the “Harrington Park” sign.

Please be respectful and stay out of cultivated areas of the properties.



Dog Owners: Keep dogs under your control at all times, away from private yards and buildings, and out of all cultivated fields. It is the duty of each person who owns, possesses, or controls a dog to remove and dispose of any feces left by his or her dog.



Assabet River



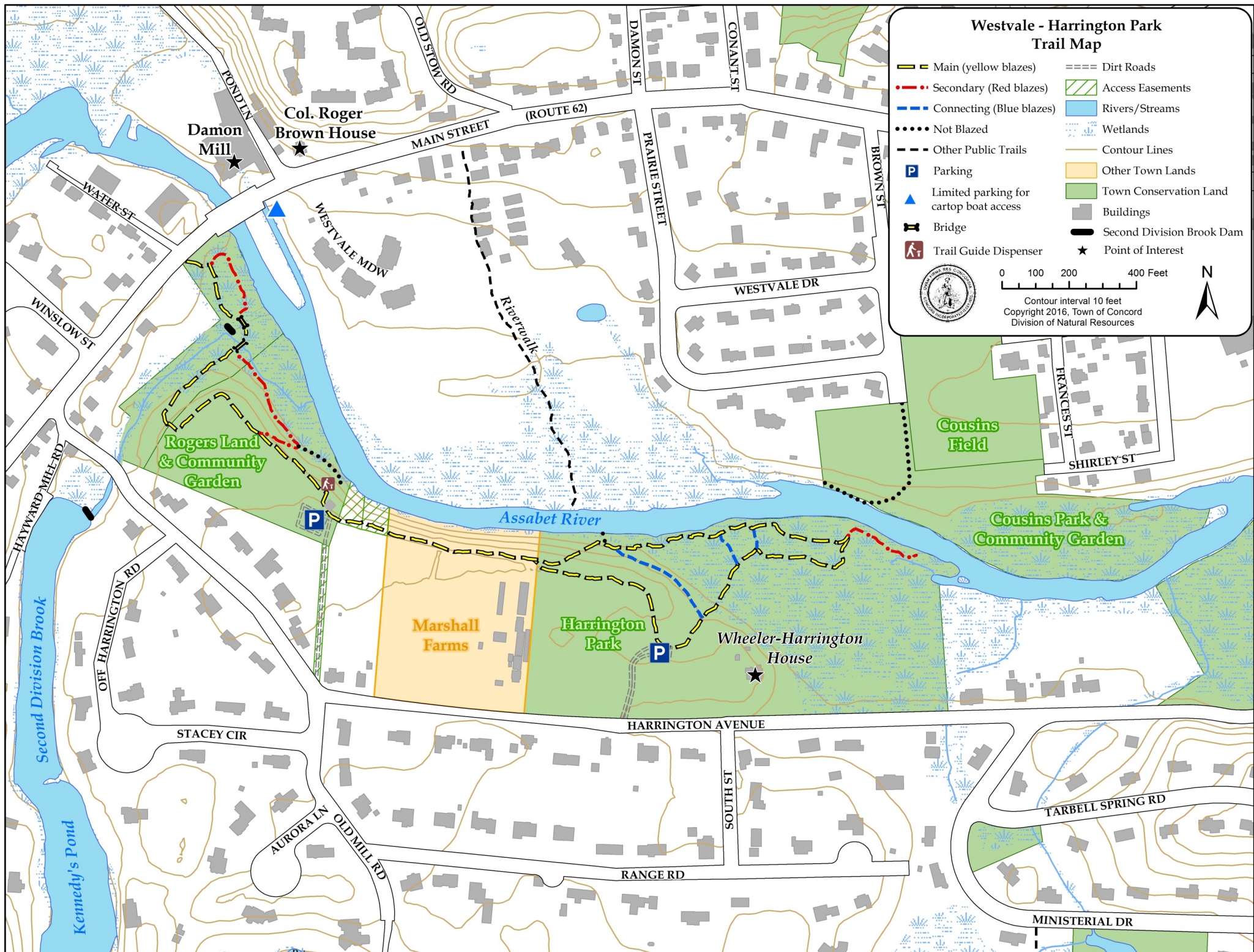
Westvale- Harrington Park Trail Guide



Second Division Brook



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Westvale-Harrington Park

Suggested Walks

Harrington Loop – From the Harrington parking lot, walk to the right rear (NE) corner to the main (yellow-blazed) trail that leads downhill to trails in grassy vegetation by the Assabet River. Stay right at three junctions with blue-blazed trails to remain on the main trail to a rock outcrop. Then follow the red-blazed trail with nearby views of the river. At the end of the red-blazed trail, reverse direction back to the rock outcropping and follow the yellow-blazed trail that forks to the right along the river. Follow this trail along the side of the hill and up-slope to the active agricultural land of the Marshall Farm. Turn left on the yellow-blazed trail at the top of the hill to return to the parking lot. Walking time: 25 minutes. (Alternatively, turn to the right and follow the yellow-blazed trail beside the fields to join the Second Division Brook Walk.)

Second Division Brook Walk – From the Rogers Community Garden parking lot, walk to the left (NW) beside the agricultural field on the main (yellow-blazed) trail and turn a sharp right down the gravel ramp (red-blazed trail), then left at the bottom. Follow this trail as it traverses the bottom edge of the hill, joins the yellow-blazed trail, and turns right over a footbridge. Follow the main trail, staying left at junctions with a red trail, ending at Main Street where a short walk to the right across Main Street reaches the Damon Mill and the Roger Brown House. **Caution: Heavy automobile traffic on Main Street must be negotiated without a crosswalk to reach the sidewalk on the other side.** Reverse direction back across Main Street. Turn left onto the red-blazed trail that offers views of the Assabet River before rejoining the main trail to the left at a bog bridge. After crossing back

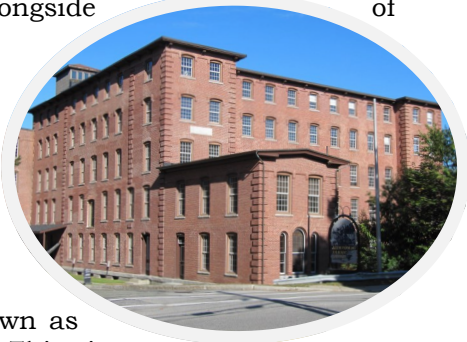
over the footbridge, continue straight on the yellow-blazed trail to the agricultural field, turning left back around the field to the parking lot. Walking time: 25 minutes.

Points of Interest

Damon Mill

The large Italianate brick textile mill building with the “Damondale” granite tablet at the corner of Pond Lane and Main Street was built in 1862 following the destruction by fire of the original wooden structure owned in 1808 by Roger Brown’s son, John Brown. The mill eventually came under the ownership of Calvin Carver Damon, who made the mill successful by the invention of a new light wool-cotton fabric called Domet, an improvement over the homemade “linsey-woolsey” used in undergarments. A turbine driven by water from the mill pond on the Assabet River supplied power to the looms. A portion of the raceway still can be seen where it passes under Main Street alongside of the river.

The mill was an anchor business in this area of Concord once known as Westvale. This site has a long history back to 1658, originally as a peat-bog iron forge and a gristmill, before becoming a fulling mill. The three-generation run of the Damon family ended with the decline of textile manufacturing in the North and the recession of 1893 that forced the company into bankruptcy and termination of operation in 1898. The mill was subsequently used by the



Concord Rubber Company, followed by Strathmore Worsted Mills until 1923, and then by Concord Cold Storage Warehouse before it was abandoned. It was saved from demolition when purchased at auction in 1977, and restored as the Damonmill Square office park. This building has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) since 1980.

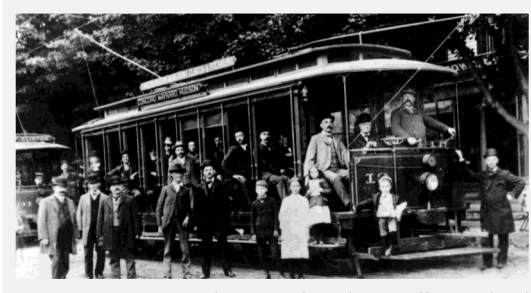
Col. Roger Brown House

From the western end of the main trail, a short walk to the right (sidewalk across the street), leads to the Colonel Roger Brown House at 1694 Main Street that dates to 1708. On April 19, 1775, Roger Brown (1749 - 1840) was busy adding on to this house when called to action to fight the British at Lexington and Concord. He and His carpenters walked to the fight at the North ridge. Roger served in the local militia and joined the successful campaign to suppress "Shays' Rebellion" in 1786. At discharge he had attained the rank of colonel. He was otherwise a farmer and prominent citizen of Concord, elected as Selectman in 1796. The house was renovated in 1889 and listed in the NRHP in 1983.



Streetcars on Main Street

From the trail entrance on Main Street, you once could have seen an electric streetcar car traveling the rails on its way between Maynard and Concord Junction. From 1901 to 1923, Main Street in Westvale was serviced by the Concord,



*Concord-Maynard-Hudson Trolley, undated
Courtesy of the Concord Public Library*

Maynard & Hudson Street Railway. At a nickel a ride, it would have been a convenient mode of transportation for the workers across the street at the old Damondale mill building. The railway line was never profitable, falling onto hard times and ceasing operation in 1923.

Assabet River

The rapid waters of the Assabet River have powered a mill in this area throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. The name “assabet” is Algonquin, possibly meaning “the place where the river turns back”, so named because at high water, it is diverted at its confluence with the Sudbury River and overflows into marshland. The river has its source in Westborough

and its watershed includes parts of twenty towns before it joins the Sudbury River at Egg Rock to form the Concord

River. In colonial times, fish were abundant in the river. Although fishing is still a favorite pastime, eating fish from the Assabet River is now prohibited because of mercury pollution from years of industrial abuse.



Second Division Brook & Dam

In 1655, the English planters agreed on a “second division” of town land following the original allotments set up at the founding of Concord in 1635. Farmland had become less productive and a new generation needed land to begin farms of their own. To accommodate this need, the land farther out from the town center was divided into three “quarters”, one to the west being “Concord Village”. It was this reorganization, or second division, of land that gave the name to the brook that flows through the conservation area into the Assabet River.

A disused concrete dam across the original watercourse of the Second Division Brook dates to before 1870 and is believed to have powered a sawmill. The dam can be seen from the bog bridge that carries the trail across the muddy ditch beside it. The brook is now diverted around the south side of the dam to its confluence with the Assabet River.



Agricultural Fields

Since the early days of Concord, farming has been active here from the overlook above the Assabet River and Second Division Brook to the Wheeler-Harrington Farmhouse. Vegetables and rows of beautiful flowers can be seen growing here in season.



A small community garden is neatly divided into plots of “kitchen” gardens for Concord residents.

Wheeler-Harrington House

Considered to be the oldest residence in West Concord, the Wheeler-Harrington house is both an example of early wooden-frame New England farmhouse construction and one of three remaining pre-Revolutionary War structures in West Concord. The house and surrounding fields are associated with the many generations of the Wheeler family, original settlers of the rural ‘South Quarter’ part of Concord. The house is believed to have been built circa 1740 by Josiah and Mary Wheeler.

*Harrington House, 1937
Courtesy of the Concord Public Library*



Ownership passed from the Wheeler family in 1827 to Joseph Harrington, Jr. The farm was operated by Lucy Harrington, one of a handful of female farmers in Concord, until her death in 1907. In 1924 ownership passed to mother and son, Theresa and Ralph LeBallister. The town bought the farmhouse with 15.6 acres of farmland in 1974 when Ralph and Mary LeBallister put the property up for sale to a developer with plans to turn this historically significant property into a tennis club. This house was listed in the NRHP in 2013.